

REMARKS

Applicants have amended the Specification and claims 1, 2, 8, 12, 13, 14, 22, 23, and 29 to make certain corrections.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-32 as obvious (35 U.S.C. §103) over Dedrick (U.S. Patent No. 5,717,923) in view of Tackbary (U.S. Patent No. 5,555,496). Applicants traverse the rejection for the following reasons.

Independent claims 1, 12, and 22 concern generating output material. The claims require generating a customer record in a first database table to include fields specifying at least one product, customer preferences, and a selected output method to deliver generated output material on the product specified in the customer record. At least one customer record in the first database table is received to process. At least one content file is accessed by processing a second database table using values in one received customer record. The content of each accessed file is generated into the output material. A determination is then made of one of a plurality of delivery options from the customer record and the output material is transmitted via the determined delivery option to the customer specified in the customer record.

The Examiner found that FIG. 3, col. 16, lines 23-32 and the Abstract of Dedrick teaches the claim requirement of accessing at least one content file by querying a second database table using values in one received customer record, which comes from the first database table. (Office Action, pg. 2) Applicants amended claims 1, 12, and 22 to clarify that the processing operation comprised querying. This requirement is disclosed in the Application at page 8, line 17 to page 8, line 2 and page 13, lines 11-24.

The cited FIG. 3 of Dedrick illustrates a block diagram having a content database 34 and user profile database 30. Nowhere does FIG. 3 teach that values in a customer record in a first table are used to query a second database table to access one content file.

The cited col. 16, lines 23-32 of Dedrick discusses how a metering server requests advertising information and transfers the received advertisement to the client system of the end user. The metering server then credits the user's account and records the profile data of the user who requested advertisement. The client system then customizes the advertisement for the user.

Nowhere does this cited section teach or suggest the claim requirement of using a value in a customer record in a first database table to query a second database table to access one content file that is generated into the output material.

The cited Abstract discusses how a content adaptor compares electronic information received by the client system to consumer information in the personal profile database and customizes the electronic information to an individual user based on this comparison. The cited col. 6, lines 34-52 of Dedrick further explains this process. The electronic content can include fields which can be customized. If the personal profile database has sufficient data concerning a customizable field, then the content adaptor changes the value for that field to the preference contained in the personal profile database for that end user. Thus, the cited Dedrick discusses customizing electronic information with personal preference information maintained in the personal profile database. This cited part of Dedrick, however, does not teach or suggest the claim requirement that a value in a customer record in a first database table is used to query a second database table to access one content file that is then generated into the output material. Nowhere does the cited Dedrick suggest using a value in a customer record in a first database table, such as the personal profile database, to query another database table to access a content file to generate into the output material. Instead, the cited Dedrick discusses just inserting personal information from a personal profile database into an electronic form, not using the personal information to query another database to access a content file as claimed.

The Examiner recognized that Dedrick does not teach the claimed delivery options and cited col. 9, lines 7-15 and col. 1, line 10 to col. 2, line 67, FIGs. 1, 5 of Tackbary for this additional requirement. (Office Action, pg. 3) The cited col. 9, lines 7-15 discusses a mail mode box to allow a user to electronically select a method by which a the card is sent. The cited col. 1, line 10 to col. 2, line 67 discusses how contact information for recipients of greeting type cards is entered into a database. The address from the database can be added to the card to send to the recipient. This cited section further mentions permitting the user having selected cards to send the order via mail, telephone or electronically to a card repository and distribution center for processing. The cited FIG. 1 shows a database maintaining information for a person ordering

cards and FIG. 5 shows a card dialog box in which the user can view information about the status of a card event and recipient..

Although the cited Tackbary discusses electronically storing information to include in a greeting-type card, the independent claims 1, 12, and 22 require that the delivery options are stored in a customer record whose values are used to query a second database to determine the content to generate into the output material. Nowhere does the cited Tackbary nor Dedrick teach the combination claim requirement of storing the delivery option in a customer record whose values are used to query a database to access the content for the output material. The Examiner does not cite any art that suggests such a claimed combination and, thus, is proposing modifications to the cited prior art that are nowhere taught or suggested in the cited art. For these reasons, Applicants submit that the claimed combination of providing delivery options in the customer record whose values are used to query a database to determine content files provides additional grounds of patentability over the cited art.

Additionally, as discussed above, the cited Dedrick does not teach the claim requirement of accessing the content file by querying a second database table using values in the received customer record to generate the content into the output material as claimed.

For all the above reasons, Applicants submit that claims 1, 12, and 22 are patentable over the cited combination of Dedrick and Tackbary.

Claims 2-11, 13-21, and 23-32 are patentable over the cited art because they depend from claims 1, 12, and 22, which are patentable for the reasons discussed above. Claims 3, 5, 7-11, 14, 16, 18-22, 24, 26, and 28-32 provide additional grounds of patentability over the cited art. On pages 5 and 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner does not specify which patent is referenced with respect to the rejections of the dependent claims. For purposes of this discussion, Applicants assume the Examiner is referencing Dedrick.

Claims 3, 14, and 24 depend from claims 1, 12, and 22 and further require that generating the customer records comprises executing a mining program against a database including customer information to determine information to populate at least one customer record from the

customer. The Examiner cited col. 1, line 37 to col. 2, line 15 of Dedrick as teaching the additional requirement of these claims (Office Action, pg. 5). Applicants traverse.

The cited col. 1, line 37 to col. 2, line 15 of Dedrick discuss how electronic information providers desire large amounts of information about their markets, such as demographic characteristics of consumers. The cited section further discusses customizing electronic information to individuals based on there previous actions. The cited col. 2 discusses a personal profile database storing consumer information. A content adaptor compares electronic info received by the client system to consumer information in the personal profile database and customize the electronic info to the individual based on the comparison.

Nowhere does the cited Dedrick discuss executing a mining program to mine a data base including customer information to determine information to use to populate one customer record. Instead, the cited Dedrick discusses how information from a personal profile database is used to customize info sent to the individual, not how a database is mined to determine information to add to a customer record as claimed.

According, claims 3, 14, and 24 provide additional grounds of patentability over the cited art.

Claims 5, 16, and 26 depend from claims 4, 15, and 25 (which require that the delivery options include electronic mail, facsimile and postal mail) and further require automatically transforming the output material to a format compatible with the selected delivery option, wherein a different format is used for each delivery option, The transformed output is transmitted to the customer via the selected delivery option. The Examiner cited col. 1, line 37 to col. 2, line 15 and col. 6, lines 33-52 of Dedrick as teaching the additional requirements of these claims. (Office Action, pg. 5)

As discussed, the cited col. 1, line 37 to col. 2, line 15 discusses how information to transmit to an individual may be customized with personal profile information for the individual. The cited col. 6, lines 33-52 further discusses how content to the individual may be customized with information for the individual from a personal profile database.

The cited col. 6, further discusses how the content adaptor may deliver electronic information in a format specified in the personal profile database. Although the cited Dedrick discusses generating content in different media formats, e.g., video or audio, this is different from the claim requirement of transforming output material to a format compatible with a selected delivery option, e.g., fax, mail, e-mail etc. Dedrick does not teach that the media formats concern a format compatible with a selected delivery option specifying how the content is transmitted. Thus, nowhere do these cited sections of Dedrick anywhere teach or suggest the claim requirement of automatically transforming output material to a format compatible with a selected delivery option. Further, nowhere does Dedrick suggest the claim requirement that a different format is used for each delivery option. Instead, Dedrick just discusses how the content may be generated in different media formats. The Examiner has not cited any part of Dedrick linking the different media formats to specific delivery options. Accordingly, claims 5, 16, and 26 provide additional grounds of patentability over the cited art.

Claims 7, 18, and 28 depend from claims 4, 15, and 25 (which require that the delivery options include electronic mail, facsimile and postal mail) and further require that the output material is automatically transmitted using one of the selected delivery options after generating the output material and further automatically printed for subsequent postal mailing to a customer street address. The Examiner cited col. 1, line 37 to col. 2, line 15, col. 6, lines 47-52, and the Abstract of Dedrick as teaching the additional requirements of these claims. (Office Action, pg. 5) Applicants traverse.

As discussed, the cited cols. 1 and 2 of Dedrick discuss how user information may be customized. The cited col. 6, lines 47-52 mentions how a default format may be video, but the personal profile database may indicate an alternative media format to use instead of a default format. As discussed, Dedrick's discussion of generating content into different media formats, e.g., audio and video, nowhere suggests or concerns the claim requirement of transmitting output using a selected delivery option. Moreover, nowhere do the cited sections of Dedrick teach or suggest the claim requirement that the output material is printed and mailed after being automatically transmitted using the selected delivery option.

Accordingly, claims 7, 18, and 28 provide additional grounds of patentability over the cited art.

Claims 8, 19, and 29 depend from claims 1, 12, and 22 and further require processing a template including queries of records in the second database table. Accessing at least one file using values in one received customer record comprises accessing at least one value in a field in one customer record to include in a query against the second database table and applying the query against the second database to determine a record associated with a file including fields matching the query. The accessed file is associated with the determined record. In such case, generating the content into the output material comprises generating the content into the template, which forms the output material.

The claims 8, 19, and 29 require accessing a file using values in one customer record from the first database table to include in a query against the second database table to determine a record associated with a file such that the accessed file generated into the content is associated with the determined record.

No cited section of Dedrick teaches the claim requirement of using a value from a customer record in the first database table field to include in a query against the second database table. Instead, the cited col. 1, line 37 to col. 2, line 15 discusses how content may include information from a personal profile database. Further, nowhere is there any teaching in the cited Dedrick of the claim requirement of generating content by using customer information from a first database table to query a second database table to determine a record, and then determine a file associated with the record to include in the content as claimed.

Further, the cited col. 14, lines 55-64 discusses how a end user may search and review ads from an advertising content database, and answer queries and take alternate paths to external databases. Nowhere does this cited section concern generating content by using values from a customer record in a first database table to query a second database table.

The Examiner took Official Notice that processing a template is well known in the art. Although processing templates are well known in the art in general, the claims concern processing templates that include queries of records in a second database table, such that the

queries use values from a customer record in a first database table to query a second database table to locate records that correspond to content files to generate into the template. Applicants submit that there is no such teaching in the cited art of the claimed query technique for adding content to templates.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 8, 19, and 29 provide additional grounds of patentability over the cited art.

Claims 9, 20, and 30 depend from claims 8, 19, and 29 and further require that there are multiple files for each query, wherein the records associated with the files for each query have different values in at least one field, and wherein determining the record comprises determining the record from the files associated with the query that matches the search criteria.

The Examiner cited the same sections of Dedrick cited with respect to claims 8, 19, and 29. (Office Action, pg. 6) Applicants traverse because the cited Dedrick nowhere teaches or suggests the additional claim requirements that there are multiple files whose content will be added for a query. Instead, the cited Dedrick just discusses substituting content from a personal profile database into information to return. Nowhere is there suggestion that the content to include comprises multiple files associated with a query result as claimed.

Accordingly, claims 9, 20, and 30 provide additional grounds of patentability over the cited art.

Claims 10, 21, and 31 depend from claims 9, 20, and 30 and further require that each query is maintained in a container in the template and that the file having the associated record that matches the query is generated into the container. The appearance of the file content generated into the containers is resized in the output material. The Examiner cited the same sections of Dedrick discussed above with respect to claims 10, 21, and 31. (Office Action, pg. 6)

Applicants submit that nowhere does the cited Dedrick teach or suggest that a file associated with a record that matches a query is generated into the container. Instead, the cited Dedrick just discusses how data from a personal profile database may be added to content. Dedrick does not teach or suggest adding content from a file associated with a record as claimed.

Moreover, claims 10, 21, and 31 require resizing the appearance of the output material. Nowhere does the cited Dedrick suggest resizing the appearance of output material in the template.

Claims 11, 22, and 32 depend from claims 9, 20, and 30 and further require accessing data from the customer record to insert into the text generated into the container from the accessed file generated into the container. Again the Examiner cites the same sections of Dedrick. (Office Action, pg. 6).

Claims 11, 22, and 32 require generating data from the customer record into text generated from a file resulting from a query on the second database table. Thus, in claims 11, 22, and 32, the data from the customer record is used twice, once in a query of a second database table to return a content file to generate into the template and second time to include in the content from the file. The cited Dedrick nowhere discusses such use of customer data from a customer record to query a second table and return a file of content and then add data from the same customer record into the content from the accessed file. Accordingly, claims 11, 22, and 32 provide additional grounds of patentability over the cite dart.

Conclusion

For all the above reasons, Applicants submit that the pending claims 1-32 are patentable over the art of record. Applicants submit herewith a petition and fee for a one-month extension of time. Nonetheless, should any additional fees be required, please charge Deposit Account No. 50-0585.

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The attorney of record invites the Examiner to contact him at (310) 553-7977 if the Examiner believes such contact would advance the prosecution of the case.

Dated: January 14, 2002

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION

The paragraph on page 9, lines 3-12 was amended as follows: paragraph:

FIG. 3 illustrates an example of a marketing brochure produced in accordance with the preferred embodiments. A designer would design the layout of a template including containers, which are regions of the template into which content from files from the content database 8 are inserted. FIG. 4 illustrates a template 100 in which the user defines the layout of how content in the files in the customer 6 and content databases 8 will be inserted into the template 100 to generate the marketing material. The designer creates containers within the template 100. A product name container 102 displays the name of the product of interest to the customer. This information is accessed directly from the Product field (shown in FIG. [2a] 2b) of the customer record and displays the product name, numbered as 50 in FIG. 3.

The paragraph on page 10, lines 13-22 was amended as follows:

Similarly, container 108 includes a query on the type of printing. This searches the files for paragraph 2 that have a "type of printing" column value that matches the type of printing in the selected customer record. In the example, the customer record, in FIG. [2a] 2b, shows the "type of printing" as continuous forms. This would cause the selection of a file including in its associated metadata indication that it is a paragraph 2 file and that has a value of "continuous forms" in the "type of printing" column. As shown in FIG. 3, the "continuous forms" value causes the insertion in the paragraph 2 container 108 of a file including information on media flexibility, numbered 56 in FIG. 3, which describes the type of forms and data that may be driven through the system.

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 2, 8, 12, 13, 14, 22, 23, and 29 are amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A automated creation and delivery method for generating output material, comprising:

generating a customer record in a first database table to include fields specifying at least one product, customer preferences, and a selected output method to deliver generated output material on the product specified in the customer record;

receiving at least one customer record in the first database table to process;

accessing at least one content file by [processing] querying a second database table using values in one received customer record;

generating the content of each accessed file into the output material;

determining a selected one of a plurality of delivery options from the customer record;

and

transmitting the output material via the determined delivery option to the customer specified in the customer record.

2. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the customer records in the first database table are generated by a human operator interacting with a customer to determine customer and preferences.

8. (Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
processing a template including queries of records in the second database table;
wherein accessing at least one file using values in one received customer record further comprises:

(i) accessing at least one value in a field in one customer record to include in a query against the second database table; and

(ii) applying the query against the second database table to determine a record associated with a file including fields matching the query, wherein the accessed file is associated with the determined record, and wherein generating the content into the output material comprises generating the content into the template, which forms the output material.

12. (Amended) An automated creation and delivery system for generating output material, comprising:

means for generating a customer record in a first database table to include fields specifying at least one product, customer preferences, and a selected output method to deliver generated output material on the product specified in the customer record;

means for receiving at least one customer record in the first database table to process;

means for accessing at least one content file by [processing] querying a second database table using values in one received customer record;

means for generating the content of each accessed file into the output material;

means for determining a selected one of a plurality of delivery options from the customer record; and

means for transmitting the output material via the determined delivery option to the customer specified in the customer record.

13. (Amended) The system of claim 12, further comprising means for allowing a human operator to enter the data for the customer records in the first database table when interacting with a customer to determine customer preferences.

19. (Amended) The system of claim 12, further comprising:

means for processing a template including queries of records in the second database table;

wherein the means for accessing at least one file using values in one received customer record further performs [comprises]:

[means for] (i) accessing at least one value in a field in one customer record to include in a query against the second database table; and

[means for] (ii) applying the query against the second database table to determine a record associated with a file including fields matching the query, wherein the accessed file is associated with the determined record, and wherein the means for generating the content into the output material comprises generating the content into the template, which forms the output material.

22. (Amended) An article of manufacture for providing an automated creation and delivery system for generating output material, the article of manufacture comprising a computer usable media including at least one computer program embedded therein that is capable of causing at least one computer to perform:

generating a customer record in a first database table to include fields specifying at least one product, customer preferences, and a selected output method to deliver generated output material on the product specified in the customer record;

receiving at least one customer record in the first database table to process;

accessing at least one content file by [processing] querying a second database table using values in one received customer record;

generating the content of each accessed file into the output material;

determining a selected one of a plurality of delivery options from the customer record;

and

transmitting the output material via the determined delivery option to the customer specified in the customer record.

23. (Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 22, wherein the customer records in the first database table are generated by a human operator interacting with a customer to determine customer and preferences.

29. (Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 22, further comprising:
processing a template including queries of records in the second database table;
wherein accessing at least one file using values in one received customer record further
comprises:

(i) accessing at least one value in a field in one customer record to include in a
query against the second database table; and

(ii) applying the query against the second database table to determine a record
associated with a file including fields matching the query, wherein the accessed file is
associated with the determined record, and wherein generating the content into the output
material comprises generating the content into the template, which forms the output
material.